

The Devil's Argument

By Tom Esterbrook

Death beckons

(=>space between stanzas)

and whispers slyly

In our ears "~~come~~"

"Come  
Lie down

"And softly

"Sleep."

> So easy now this slumber

~~Soft~~ DEEP

so quiet now the pressures of  
a life.

> "Come sleep"

Says death

"And  
I give up the strife and striving  
"And lie down.

> "Then nevermore

"The tediousness to weep

"Not once again."

> Ah death what treachery  
— thou hast

To lie so <sup>softly</sup> ~~slightly~~ to  
Our weariness.

For hell itself is gained  
By giving up.

> Each backward step  
- But takes us nearer to  
A brink of Fierce Endure  
And each back pace  
we make

~~Is~~ Is but a stride we'll  
have to take  
~~Against~~ Against the tide again.

> How glad  
How easy now to purr  
"Death is but sleep  
Lie down and rise no  
more."

> For death and sleep alike  
But slide us down a <sup>grade</sup> ~~hill~~  
That we  
~~We~~ Must climb if we  
Would then be free!

> What humor it must be  
to death

When we find out we have  
but lost

Another mile

We must

Make back

~~##~~ And when we find  
From of the bier  
the weariness of ~~##~~  
a ~~new~~ new life  
Unrecompensed

With friends or what  
We learned the last.

"Give up!"

Thus speak the traitors of  
Our lives.

"Grow tired, old and

"Die!"

Death  
saves nothing  
but our joy

"And be no menace to us

"How whose life

"you threaten with

"your breath."

7  
A placid far  
And unreached day  
'T would be when I  
Laid back and let  
The song of death  
Bequeath me tortured  
Miles  
I must face up again.  
~~I must climb back.~~

7  
I live. Death  
And Death?  
Thought the ~~idea~~ die!  
~~Why, let it all!~~  
End